

## Hiking Tips

Until trails are established and marked by California State Parks, please help us preserve the unique natural and cultural features of Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and observe the following:

- Hike only on safe pathways. Veering onto untrodden areas destroys the natural environment and increases your chances of coming into contact with poison oak, rattlesnakes and ticks.
- Everything, from the barest twig to the rustiest horseshoe, is now a part of this California State Park. If you see anything suspicious, including the removal or disturbance of our precious resources, please report it immediately.
- Know your physical limits. Summer temperatures can reach 100 degrees and the terrain is rugged.
- Always carry plenty of water. And remember to drink it!
- Don't hike alone. Use the "buddy" system. Tell a friend or family member of your plans. Let them know when you plan to return.
- In case of an emergency, please call 911.



- *Park hours are 8 a.m. to sunset daily. For your safety and that of the park community, please observe these access hours.*
- *Access to the park is from Chatsworth Park South on the southeast side, or from a signed trailhead off Lilac Road toward the west.*
- *Dogs are not permitted in the park.*
- *Fires are not permitted. This is a high fire-danger area.*

**Santa Susana Pass  
State Historic Park  
c/o Topanga Sector  
1501 Will Rogers State Park Road  
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272  
(310) 454-8212**

## Discover California State Parks

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

For general state park information, contact the California State Parks Communications Office, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001, or call 1-800-777-0369. Outside the U.S., call (916) 653-6995, or visit our website at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need special assistance should contact the park at (310) 454-8212. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting the Communications Office. To use the California Relay Service with TDD, call (888) 877-5378 or without TDD, call (888) 877-5379.



GRAY DAVIS  
Governor

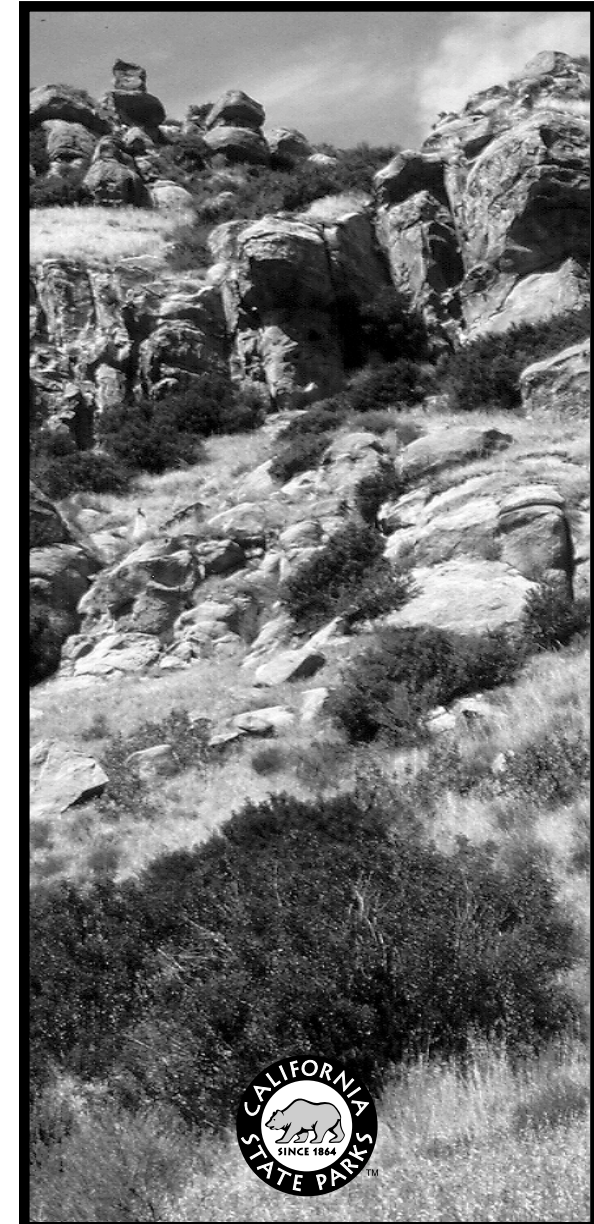
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Director, California State Parks

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# SANTA SUSANA PASS State Historic Park





# Santa Susana Pass

## State Historic Park

This 670-acre historic park, located in Los Angeles County where the Simi Hills meet the Santa Susana Mountains, is rich in natural, historical and cultural significance. Here in the western part of the Transverse Ranges, the land is dominated by high, narrow ridges and deep canyons covered with an abundant variety of plant life. The park offers panoramic views of the rugged natural landscape as a striking contrast to the developed communities nearby.

The diverse terrain of ridges, canyons and rock outcrops houses several varieties of habitats within the park's environs. There are two seasonally intermittent streams whose flows—at times significant enough to produce waterfalls—depend on the rainfall. The presence or absence of springs and streams at different times of the year has a profound effect on the local vegetation.

The landscape of Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park consists of sandstone ramparts—relics of mountain-building forces exerted nearly five million years ago. These memorable formations have been used as the background for several western films.

The soil, which ranges from hard sandstone bedrock to various forms of the surrounding clay, shale and crushed sandstone, provides a perfect habitat for the abundant coastal sage scrub, chaparral and annual grasses among smaller areas of oak and riparian woodlands and riparian scrub. The sandstone rock outcrops shelter the rare Santa Susana tarplant, while the moister north-facing



*The maroon monkey flower is a rare and distinctive form of the bush monkey flower (Mimulus aurantiacus). It is a perennial shrub found on dry slopes within chaparral, coastal sage scrub and oak woodlands. This form has deep red flowers and blooms from March to July.*



slopes support more dense vegetation. Coastal sagebrush, buckwheat, laurel sumac, chamise and wild lilac are typical shrubs within the park environs. In the small canyons, where seasonal rains are more likely to be channeled, some riparian species such as willow and Mexican elderberry grow well. In the larger riparian channels, coast live oak, California walnut, sycamores and willows create a dense canopy. Spring rains produce acres of spectacular flowers and blooming shrubs.

Because of its greatly diverse plant communities, the availability of water, and a varied physical structure, this region supports a rich variety of wildlife. This rugged area is part of an important wildlife corridor that connects the San Gabriel, Santa Susana and Santa Monica Mountain ranges. Mule deer, bobcats, coyotes, gray foxes and ring-tailed cats are among the many native animals to be found here.

## Cultural And Historical Value

Two distinct California Indian groups were the primary dwellers of this area: the Tongva and the Chumash. It is not known whether the area was equally shared by the two groups, or whether one was dominant. The Tongva people, highly proficient at deep-sea fishing, shellfish gathering and hunting sea mammals, were especially skilled at trading with their neighboring groups—with shell beads, steatite, dried fish and sea otter pelts among their trade items.

The Chumash people were technologically and artistically sophisticated, creating fine basketry, canoes capable of sea voyages and spectacular rock art. Today, descendants of the Chumash and Tongva people have maintained the traditions of their ancestors through community outreach and educational interpretive programs.

The Santa Susana Mountains and the San Fernando Valley have a history as a transportation corridor that dates back to 1769, when Spanish Army Captain Gaspar de Portolá led an expedition over the Sepulveda Pass from San Diego to Monterey Bay. During the next 52 years, the Spanish rulers established presidios, towns and a system of 21 missions. The route of

travel between the missions was known as El Camino Real (the King's Highway). Today, the Simi Valley Freeway—also known as State Highway 118—follows the 1895 route built to ease the grade of the old road over the Santa Susana Pass.

## Activities

Located at the edge of an urban area, this rugged park provides exceptional outdoor recreation. Visitors can enjoy its scenic open space with a set of trails networking through the property. Docents from the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains lead regular environmental education programs for local school children, and on Sundays from October through June the Santa Susana Mountain Park Association leads guided hikes.

Photographers will find inspiration in the springtime blossoms, the striking rock formations and the views from the ridges. Equestrians will enjoy a system of horse trails through the park.

